

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A communications and data transfer system for gaming establishments having a plurality of gaming machines arranged in a configuration, said system comprising a hand held portable transponder adapted to transmit and receive modulated electromagnetic radiation over a limited range which is about the linear distance occupied by said gaming machines, said transponder further comprising a display device and an input mechanism, and

wherein each of said gaming machines includes a communication module connected to a master gaming controller of each said gaming machine, whereby identification and control signals for one or more selected gaming machines of said plurality of gaming machines can be input to, and sent from, said transponder to the master gaming controller of the one or more selected gaming machines and in reply thereto, status data of said one or more selected gaming machines can be sent to, or overwritten by, said transponder;

wherein said transponder is further operable: to make a prediction regarding performance of at least one new game to replace a current game of said one or more gaming machines, and display the prediction regarding the performance of the at least one new game on said one or more gaming machines ~~wherein the master gaming controller controls the games played on said gaming machine.~~

2. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said transponder comprises a personal digital assistant.

3. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1 wherein said transponder can download information to, and upload information from, a plurality of said gaming machines all located within said limited range.

4. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 3 wherein the transponder displays a list or a graphical representation of said plurality of said gaming machines all located within said limited range and in communication with said transponder.

5. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1 wherein each of said plurality of gaming machine has stored therein a multiple number of game programs and each of said control signals selects one of said programs to determine which game can be played on said machines.
6. (Original) The system of claim 4 wherein the selection of said game program occurs at a predetermined time and after transmission of said control signals.
7. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1 where each said gaming machine is operable to receive a download of a game program and said control signals are for selecting and for triggering the download of a selected game program to one or more of said plurality of gaming machines.
8. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said status data includes data selected from the group consisting of cash tin status, hopper status, printer paper status, button malfunction status, lamp status, note reject data, coin reject data and cash turnover ratio.
9. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said control signals input configuration data into the or each selected said gaming machine, said configuration data being selected from the group consisting of game type, percentage return, button panel layout, GMID number, and home number.
10. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein said status data includes performance data for one or more selected gaming machines.
11. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 10 wherein the performance data is for games played by a particular player on the one or more selected gaming machines.
12. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 10 wherein the performance data is an outcome of a particular game played on the one or more selected gaming machines.

13. (Original) The system of claim 1 wherein the communication module is coupled to a wireless interface.

14. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 13, wherein the wireless interface is located on a player tracking unit coupled to the gaming machine.

15. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1, wherein the transponder is operable to display a map of a casino layout on the display.

16. (Original) The system of claim 14, wherein the transponder is operable to display a location of the transponder on the casino layout.

17. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1, wherein the transponder is operable to provide directions to a particular gaming machine of said plurality of gaming machines.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 1, wherein each gaming machine is operable to generate a game of chance, receive cash or indicia of credit for wagers on the game of chance, to present an outcome for the game of chance and output cash or indicia of credit.

20. (Previously Presented) A method of outputting or changing status data of a selected one or ones of a plurality of electronic gaming machines each having a master gaming controller with an electromagnetic communication module connected thereto, said plurality of gaming machines being arranged in proximity to each other in a gaming establishment, said method comprising the steps of:

- (i) bringing within range of said selected gaming machine a hand held portable transponder adapted to transmit and receive modulated electromagnetic radiation over a limited range which approximates to only the linear distance occupied by said gaming machines,

- (ii) transmitting identification and control signals from said transponder to said selected gaming machine(s) to both select game and enable the master gaming controller thereof, and
- (iii) receiving from said selected gaming machine(s) at said transponder, status data of said selected gaming machine, and/or
- (iv) transmitting from said transponder to said selected gaming machine(s) status data which is over-written into the master gaming controller of said selected gaming machine(s).

21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 20, wherein the status data is for specifying one or more game programs available for play of selected gaming machine(s).

22. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 20, further comprising: transmitting from said transponder control signals to the gaming machine to trigger a download of a selected game to said gaming machine(s).

23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 20 further comprising: transmitting from said transponder control signals to the gaming machine to input configuration data into the or each selected said gaming machine, said configuration data being selected from the group consisting of game type, percentage return, button panel layout, GMID number, and home number.

24. (Previously Presented) A method of selecting a game for a gaming machine on a hand-held computing device, the method comprising:

- displaying a list or a graphical representation of one or more gaming machine in communication with the hand-held computing device;

- receiving a selection of one of the gaming machines via an input device on the hand-held computing device;

- displaying performance data for the selected gaming machine on a display screen of the hand-held computing device;

- receiving a selection of a new game for the selected gaming machine via the input device on the hand-held computing device;

displaying a predicted performance of the new game on the selected gaming machine on the display screen of the hand-held computing device; and

transmitting from the hand-held computing device to said selected gaming machine status data which is over-written into a master gaming controller of said selected gaming machine wherein the status data is for allowing the new game to be made available for play on the gaming machine.

25. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein only one game is available for play on the gaming machine at any one time.

26. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein the status data triggers a download of the new game from a remote device to the selected gaming machine.

27. (Previously Presented) A hand held portable transponder adapted to transmit and receive modulated electromagnetic radiation over a limited range about the linear distance occupied by a plurality of gaming machines; wherein each of said gaming machines includes a communication module connected to a master gaming controller of each said gaming machine whereby identification and control signals for one or more selected games machines of said plurality of gaming machines can be input to, and sent from, said transponder to the master gaming controller of the selected gaming machines and in reply thereto, status data of said selected gaming machines can be sent to, or overwritten by, said transponder.

28. (Previously Presented) A computer readable medium including computer program code, comprising:

computer program code for allowing a hand held portable transponder to transmit and receive modulated electromagnetic radiation over a limited range about the linear distance occupied by a plurality of gaming machines, wherein each of said gaming machines includes a communication module connected to a master gaming controller of each of said gaming machine; and

computer program code for sending by said transponder identification and control signals for one or more selected gaming machines of said plurality of gaming machines.

29. (Previously Presented) A gaming machine operable to receive identification and control signals from a hand held portable transponder adapted to transmit and receive modulated electromagnetic radiation over a limited range about the linear distance occupied by a plurality of gaming machines including said gaming machine; wherein each of said plurality of gaming machines includes a communication module connected to a master gaming controller of each said gaming machine whereby identification and control signals for said games can be input to, and sent from, said transponder to the master gaming controller of said gaming machine.

30. (Previously Presented) A gaming machine as recited in claim 29, wherein said gaming machine is further operable to send the hand held portable transponder status data of said gaming machine.